



October 8, 2003

Providence man pleads guilty to firearms possession

Ernesto Luciano, of Providence, has pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm, admitting that he wielded a gun in July during an argument with a woman on Broad Street. Luciano has a prior felony drug conviction in New Hampshire and, as a felon, is prohibited from possessing firearms.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty plea, which Luciano entered on October 3 before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi. Luciano, 29, of 24 Pennsylvania Street, has been detained since his arrest in July.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, on July 30, a group of teenagers observed Luciano arguing with a woman in the vicinity of Broad and Early streets and saw him pull out a gun. One of the teenagers flagged down a Providence police cruiser and gave the officer a description of Luciano.

A few minutes later, Officer Brian Thornton saw a man matching the description and ordered him to stop. The man, later identified as Luciano, complied but dropped a loaded gun magazine in the process. Officer Thornton seized a loaded, .22 caliber pistol from Luciano.

The statutory maximum sentence for being a felon in possession of a firearm is ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Luciano's sentence will be determined on

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the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background.

Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Goldstein prosecuted it. The case was prosecuted under a **Project Safe Neighborhoods** initiative in which firearms cases are jointly reviewed by the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office to determine where best to prosecute them. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes and gun violence.

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